

SIGMA

Leadership Series



**Great Leaders
Have a Vision**



GREAT LEADERS HAVE A VISION

“ If you don’t know where you are going,
how can you expect to get there?

— Basil S. Walsh

In the context of leadership, **Vision** is the capacity to see the big picture across the organization, industry, and economy — and to articulate a clear, compelling view of the organization’s ideal future. Leaders who hone their visionary skills have a significant positive impact on organizational effectiveness.¹ Studies have shown that leaders with vision are better at fostering employee engagement and satisfaction.²

Vision isn’t just important for senior leaders; it matters for middle and junior leaders as well. In fact, Google’s data-driven Project Oxygen identified visionary leadership as one of the eight traits of stellar middle managers.³ Middle managers — and other leaders — benefit from having a vision because they are the ones who lead teams and align their direct reports with the organization’s overall strategy.⁴ Studies have shown that visionary leaders foster a stronger shared understanding of strategy within their teams, and organizations have a better commitment to execution as a result.⁵

Do You Have Vision?

In assessing your ability to set a vision, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I understand the mission and vision of our company?
- Do I have an idea of where I want to see my team in the next 5-10 years?
- Do I regularly communicate why we are doing what we are doing?
- Do I take time for strategic planning at the start — and throughout — each new project?
- Is my team aligned in its efforts to work together towards a common goal?

Improve Your Ability to Set a Vision

Check your alignment. While visionary leadership has been shown to benefit strategic implementation, studies have also shown that this only works when leaders are well-aligned with the organization’s vision overall. Misaligned visionary managers, on the other hand, create

confusion and uncertainty. Studies found that the more a misaligned manager displayed their visionary leadership, the less strategic alignment and commitment was observed among their team.⁶ To ensure your visionary leadership is effective, take time to review your organization's strategy and goals, and keep these in mind as you set your own.

Share your vision. In addition to keeping your vision well-aligned, ensure you communicate clearly with other leaders in your organization. Be transparent with your ideas and share your goals. Do this with your direct reports and senior leaders. Sharing your vision with your superiors gives them the opportunity to ensure you're aligned, clarify any misunderstandings, and help you get back on track when you've drifted off course.

Engage your team. Vision isn't just set; it must also be carried forward. In the words of renowned American actor Will Rogers, "Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there." To ensure your vision is carried forward, engage your team in the process of planning and execution. Studies have shown that feeling a sense of ownership over one's work is significantly correlated with increased engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors.⁷ To create this sense of ownership, engage your team in the visionary process and ensure they feel that they are carrying the team's vision, rather than your vision alone.

Start Doing These 3 Things Now to Become a Better Visionary Leader

The following steps can help you improve your ability to set and share a vision:

1. **Write it down.** Research has shown that people are 42% more likely to achieve their goals and dreams when they write them down on a regular basis.⁸ Before you begin a new project or task, take time to reflect on your vision and write it down. State your long-term goal, as well as the immediate tasks you need to accomplish along the way to stay aligned with that goal. Keep these outlines in a place where you will see them often and be reminded of your vision.
2. **Take a step back.** Sometimes it's difficult to see the big picture when you get caught up in the whirlwind of day-to-day operations. Try taking a step back by setting aside a moment every day, 10 minutes every week, and half an hour every month simply to reflect. What went well? What didn't go well? Is the progress you're making still aligned with your vision? By dedicating time to regularly reflect on these questions, you can ensure your team stays on track.
3. **Talk about it.** Visions need to be shared in order to be realized collectively. Set aside time at the beginning of each new project or quarter to share your vision. Make it engaging; use scenarios and storytelling to paint a picture of the progress you want to see. Beyond direct reports, share your vision with your co-workers and leaders. Studies show that people are more likely to achieve their goals if they've shared them with a superior, or someone whose opinion they value.⁹ Talk about your vision with your customers too. Research shows that 63% of customers prefer to buy products and

services from companies that have a purpose or vision. Therefore, talking about your vision not only serves to motivate and engage your team, it can also help bring in business and engage your clientele.

Assess Vision With the LSP-R®

The [Leadership Skills Profile – Revised® \(LSP-R\)](#) is a personality-based leadership assessment that measures 50 core competencies, including Vision. The assessment can be administered online in 25 minutes, and comes with an automatically generated Focus Report, including scores, personalized feedback, and templates for creating competency-based leadership development plans (view a [sample Focus Report](#)).

LSP-R® Free Trial

See how you score on VISION.

Experience the LSP-R for yourself and see how you score on Vision. Receive customized feedback and templates for creating a personalized action plan. Take 25 minutes and experience the impact that data-driven personality insights can have.

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Learn More



[How Visionary Leaders Talk](#)



[Why Vision is the Most Important Thing for a Leader](#)



Develop leadership competencies with SIGMA's one-hour, high-impact [Leadership Development Workshops](#), led by our experienced coaches.

References

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